

Stages and Tennessee Alternate Assessment

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances Tennessee's special education assessment because:

- 1. Stages aligns with Tennessee extended curriculum standards in Mathematics and Reading/Language.**
- 2. Stages generates primary evidence of learner performance for the TCAP-Alt PA.**
- 3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- 4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

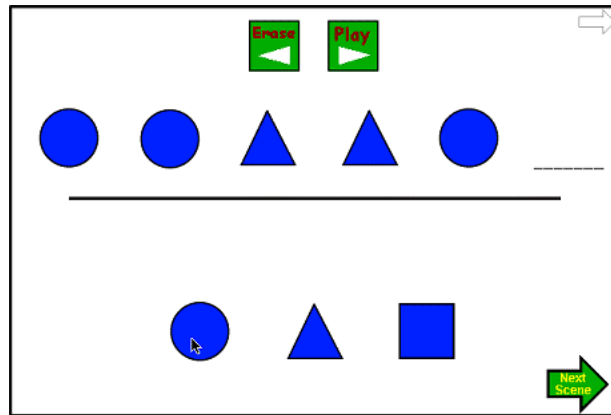
1. Stages aligns with Tennessee extended curriculum standards in Mathematics and Reading/Language.

Stages can be a tool for learners with special needs to demonstrate progress within the general curriculum framework through extensions and adaptations. The content covered in Stages activities includes mathematics and reading topics at a range of levels. The learner's IEP team can also use Stages to help determine whether or not alternate assessment is appropriate by providing informal benchmarks of learner progress in Mathematics and Reading/Language. Please refer to the section, "How Stages Correlates with TCAP-Alt" for detailed matching with extended curricula.

2. Stages generates primary evidence of learner performance for the TCAP-Alt PA.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product as a benchmark. At the end of each activity, a report with instructional data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructor may wish to then print that screen, save the screenshot, or save the information as a text-format electronic file as examples of student work for portfolio evidence collection.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include real-life community settings.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Tennessee alternate assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive benchmark tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable information on learner skill achievement, determine assessment strategy, and discover the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program - Alternate Assessment [TCAP-Alt]¹

English/Language Arts Extended/Adapted Content Standards

Writing

The student will structural and creative skills necessary to produce written language that can be read and/or interpreted by various audiences.

Viewing and Representing

The student will use, read, and view media/technology and analyze content and concepts accurately.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: Press and Hold, Press and Release

*Stage Seven: Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences
Making Stories*

- Using Stage One, the learner can demonstrate use of switch control in preparation for use of an appropriate communication device (cause-effect).
- Using Stage Seven *Building Sentences*, the learner can write message without requiring keyboard typing skills. The learner who is able to use an onscreen accessible keyboard, regular keyboard, or alternative keyboard can write sentences in response to instructor-written prompts in *Writing Sentences*. Using *Making Stories*, the learner can write multiple sentences with the aid of a photograph or imported graphic as a prompt.

Reading

The student will develop the reading skills necessary for word recognition, comprehension, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and appreciation of the written text.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Two: Nouns, Verbs, Attributes

Stage Three: Level of Representation, Object Identification, Category Identification, Function Identification

Stage Six: Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- In Stage Two, the learner is presented with short rhyming sentences. The purpose of these activities is to expose the learner to the concept of print without requiring responses. The learner activates a device to progress through each series of screens about objects, their classifications, their descriptors, and associated verbs.
- Stage Three activities extend the vocabulary presented in Stage Two by asking the learner to choose correct words in response to prompts. Examples include identifying and classifying objects.
- Stage Six *Stories* are learner-paced short passages about real people doing activities such as traveling and working. The learner uses an input device or mouse to progress from screen to screen and in order to listen to, attend to, and/or read the text. The instructor can note the student's ability to follow text with eye gaze, pointer, or gesture as it is being read.

¹ Information from the Tennessee Math and LA K-3 Standards and TCAP-Alt Manual, Appendix : Curriculum Frameworks: Extensions and Adaptations.

Sources: <http://www.ksde.org/assessment/eligibilitycriteria2112699.htm> and www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/cfcs/idea/doc/iaaim.pdf (Accessed July 22, 2002).

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- Stage Three activities extend the vocabulary presented in Stage Two by asking the learner to choose correct words in response to prompts. Examples include identifying and classifying objects.
- Stage Six *Stories* gives the learner a chance to demonstrate skill in following text as it is being read. These stories are about real people doing activities such as traveling and working.

[Speaking and] Listening/Speech

The student will [express ideas clearly and effectively in a variety of oral contexts and] apply active listening skills in the analysis and evaluation of spoken ideas.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: All 'Explore' Activities

Stage Six: Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- In Stage Five *Explore* activities, the learner attends to verbal and written instructions in order to learn how to solve problems or explore new vocabulary.
- In Stage Six *Stories* the learner can follow text on the screen as it is spoken (Multisensory) or read silently (Visual). The instructor can make note of the learner's behavior during the activity.

Mathematics

Extended/Adapted Content Standards

NUMBER SENSE AND NUMBER THEORY

In order to develop Number Sense and an understanding of Number Theory, the mathematics curriculum must include problems which require students to recognize, represent, and model real numbers and operations verbally, physically, symbolically, and/or graphically.

- Count sets of objects individually or by grouping
- Relate the use of number in the learner's environment to the study of numbers
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relative magnitude of numbers

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Number ID, Counting, Estimating

Stage Five: *Math:* Fraction ID, Fraction Application

Problem Solving: Number Guess

- Counting includes an accessible number line and pictures as virtual manipulatives. The number of objects ranges from 1 to 10. Stage Four Number ID includes numbers from 0 to 10 for the learner to explore and then identify in the context of a telephone keypad and an elevator.
- In *Estimating*, the learner can explore and demonstrate ability to discern relative quantities of objects in the context of scenes.
- Stage Five *Fraction ID* asks the learner to select the fraction that illustrates the ratio of selected pictures on the screen in relation to the total number of objects on the screen. The multiple choice questions ask the learner to distinguish fractions with like and unlike denominators. *Fraction Application* asks the learner to identify the correct number of sections of a whole object to represent a fraction or a fractional solution to a word problem.
- The learner applies knowledge of relative number magnitude in *Number Guess*. The computer gives feedback about whether a mystery number is lower or higher than the learner's guess.

ESTIMATION, MEASUREMENT, AND COMPUTATION

In order to develop understanding of Estimation, Measurement, and Computation, the mathematics curriculum should include problems which require students to apply appropriate tools and units of measurement, to develop effective estimation and computation strategies for producing reasonable results, and to calculate using appropriate tools.

- Demonstrate the meaning for operations by modeling and discussing a wide variety of problems
- Demonstrate, using standard and non-standard units, the attributes of length, capacity, weight, area, time, money, temperature, and/or angles

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Explore and Assess: Telling Time, Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- Stage Six *Stories* present the learner with short passages about people doing realistic activities such as recreation and travel. Time, money, community signs and clothing are included in the details of each passage so that the learner can relate these concepts to daily living. *Telling Time (Assess)* includes digital and analog clocks and photographs to relate questions to real scenarios. Learners click on clocks to hear and read the time displayed in the *Explore* section. The *Money* activities present the learner with questions that include photographs illustrating scenes from each of the Stage Six *Stories* activities. Coins up to \$0.25 and bills up to \$20 are included.

PATTERNS, FUNCTIONS, AND ALGEBRAIC THINKING

In order to develop Algebraic Thinking through an understanding of Patterns and Functions, the mathematics curriculum must include problems which require students to describe, extend, analyze, and create a wide variety of patterns and functions using appropriate materials and representations.

- Sort and classify objects by common attributes
- Describe, extend, and/or create a wide variety of visual, oral, and physical patterns, including those found in real life and in other disciplines, such as literature and music
- Describe and extend patterns and functions represented in tables and/or graphs

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns

- Stage Four *Patterns* activities introduce the learner to patterns using shapes, color, and sound, have them continue patterns, and allow them to generate their own patterns.

STATISTICS AND PROBABILITY

In order to develop an understanding of Statistics and Probability, the mathematics curriculum must include problems which require students to collect, organize, represent, and interpret data; make inferences and predictions; present and evaluate inferences and predictions; present and evaluate arguments based on data analysis; and model situations to determine theoretical and experimental probabilities.

- Interpret data by identifying patterns and relationships, considering cause and effect, and/or drawing conclusions

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Math:* Charts and Graphs

- The Stage Five *Charts and Graphs* activity includes bar graphs, line graphs, and pie charts. Familiar topics such as favorite snacks and animals help make the activities engaging for the learner.

SPATIAL SENSE AND GEOMETRIC CONCEPTS

In order to develop Spatial Sense and an understanding of Geometric Concepts, the mathematics curriculum must include problems which require students to explore geometric properties and relationships and to investigate, model, and analyze one-, two-, and three dimensional figures.

- Identify and classify solid and plane figures by attributes such as shape, size, symmetry, edges, corners and/or faces
- Articulate the relationships between geometric concepts and objects in the real world

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Explore and Assess:* Shape ID

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Mystery Shape

- The learner explores by using an input device to select triangles, rectangles, circles, squares, and ovals. The learner then demonstrates recognition of triangles, rectangles, circles, squares, and ovals in photographs and drawings in scenes and in isolation (blank background).
- Stage Five *Mystery Shape* applies the learner's knowledge of shape attributes to a deductive reasoning game.